

## Population Growth Study – Community Discussion

Date – 7 February 2018

‘Denise’ aged in her 30s grew up in Dandenong where she attended school, undertook post - secondary education and gained work. In 2013 she and her partner Andrew purchased a small lifestyle property in Arawata. Neither Denise nor Andrew had work in the area and both travelled back to Dandenong for work.

Denise’s work contract finished in Dandenong and through volunteering in South Gippsland, she gained casual part time work and then moved on to permanent part time administrative support work. Andrew continued to work in Dandenong for the first four years before finding work in Leongatha in 2017.

They enjoyed raising sheep and chickens and growing vegetables on their property and becoming involved socially in their local community.

The demands of the small rural lifestyle property coupled with Andrew’s long work hours and Denise’s inability to find rewarding full time work resulted in Denise finding work back in Dandenong and the couple moving from the area in early 2018.

### Background

Born in Dandenong, Denise spend her school years, post-secondary education and early employment in the Dandenong area. Denise and her partner Andrew bought a small lifestyle property in Arawata in 2013. Neither Denise nor Andrew had work in the area and continued to travel to eastern Melbourne for work. Denise’s family used to visit South Gippsland when they were younger and Denise’s sister lived in Korumburra.

### Employment

In the Dandenong area Denise worked in administrative roles in large government organisations. Denise gained casual employment in South Gippsland after volunteering locally. This casual work led to further short term part time work in the same organisation then a permanent part time position. Andrew continued to work in eastern Melbourne travelling down from the Arawata property daily. He continued to look for work in South Gippsland.

### Benefits and Barriers to living in South Gippsland

Denise and Andrew enjoyed their lifestyle in Arawata where they ran sheep, chickens and grew vegetables. They enjoyed connecting to the local community and the local fresh environment. For Denise, travel to work was easy.

### Disadvantages to living in South Gippsland

Andrew did not find local work until early 2017 so continued to travel to eastern Melbourne for work. The animals on the property required daily attention from both Denise and Andrew. When Andrew worked in Melbourne, the shorter hours of his work allowed time at the end of the day to help on the property, however the daily travel was tiring. Once Andrew found work locally, his hours of employment were longer and restricted the time available for the animals and the property.

Denise could not find full time work in South Gippsland and missed the challenges of her previous jobs. Denise was not able to tend to the needs of the animals by herself when Andrew began working longer hours. While the lifestyle was something they enjoyed, the hilly landscape and size of the land was difficult to look after in their current circumstances.

#### Future plans

Denise gained employment in a project management position in Dandenong with a large employer where ongoing opportunities may lead to promotion. Denise and Andrew moved back to the Dandenong area in early 2018 and intend to purchase a smaller property on flatter land near Tooradin or Hastings. Denise is closer to her ageing mother and her sister is no longer in Korumburra. Andrew is looking for work in Dandenong but currently continues to drive back to South Gippsland for work.